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FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6455  
INFO RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN PRIORITY 0500  
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA PRIORITY 0289  
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD PRIORITY 7273  
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU PRIORITY 5382  
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY 3915  
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI PRIORITY 1201  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO PRIORITY 3986  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3072  
RUEHCG/AMCONSUL CHENNAI PRIORITY 7866  
RUEHBI/AMCONSUL MUMBAI PRIORITY 5521  
RUEHON/AMCONSUL TORONTO PRIORITY 0322  
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA PRIORITY 2213  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI PRIORITY  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY  
RUEHBS/USEU BRUSSELS PRIORITY  
RUEHLMC/MILLENNIUM CHALLENGE CORPORATION PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 000986

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DEPARTMENT FOR SCA/INS  
MCC FOR D NASSIRY AND E BURKE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/03/2017  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PHUM](#) [MOPS](#) [CE](#)  
SUBJECT: SRI LANKA: FIGHTING SHIFTS TO THE NORTH

REF: COLOMBO 00971

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires James R. Moore, for reasons 1.4(b,d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: On July 14, the Sri Lankan Army (SLA) battled with the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Vavuniya district in northern Sri Lanka, resulting in at least 14 SLA deaths. The Government of Sri Lanka (GSL) is planning a large celebration on July 19 in downtown Colombo to celebrate last week's victory in the East (reftel). These latest clashes appear to mark the SLA's shift, following the victory in the East, toward increased engagement in the North, and continued similar offensives in the North are expected in coming weeks. End Summary.

12. (C) On July 14, the SLA returned fire on a LTTE mortar position in Vavuniya district in northern Sri Lanka. A significant battle resulted in the deaths of 14 SLA troops and 38 wounded, according to Sri Lankan Military Spokesman Brigadier Prasad Samarasinghe. Samarasinghe claimed a "large number" of LTTE were killed and wounded. News sources quoted the LTTE's Military Spokesman Irasiah Ilanthirayan as saying they killed 16 SLA troops, wounded 45, and lost three LTTE soldiers. On the same day, the Sri Lankan Air Force bombed an LTTE camp in neighboring Mannar District; however, casualty figures are not yet available. Samarasinghe called the bombing operation "successful," citing that they had intercepted LTTE communications requesting transport for casualties. Suggesting that stepped up military action in the North was likely in the coming weeks, Samarasinghe told POLFSN that additional troops would be moved into the North if required by conditions on the ground. The fighting came just three days after the GSL declared victory in the East after the takeover of Thoppigala (reftel).

13. (C) The GSL is planning a large celebration on July 19 in downtown Colombo to celebrate last week's victory in the East. The media reports that President Rajapaksa will make a speech and receive a 21 gun salute. The event will showcase an 800-troop military parade, school performances, and

helicopter fly by. The GSL reportedly will invite parliamentarians, politicians, diplomats, religious dignitaries and senior Government officials to the celebration. Although there were rumors that the event would be canceled due to security threats, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Protocol Office today confirmed the celebration is still scheduled to take place. The Embassy will consult with SCA regarding the level of our representation, if any, at the event.

¶4. (C) COMMENT: This weekend's clashes appear to mark the SLA's shift, following its victory in the East, toward increased engagement in the North. We expect to see continued similar offensives in the North in the coming weeks. We will closely monitor the situation in the North and continue to urge the GSL to pursue a political rather than military solution to the conflict.

MOORE